Influencing today’s teens about clear, consistent, credible anti-drug messages requires full understanding of youth, their wants and needs, and how to counter the ubiquitous pro-drug messages in teens’ social and technological environments. Our research and careful crafting of messages is beginning to pay off—teen drug use is down 23 percent over the past five years, and we have reason to believe our campaign has played a significant role.

—Robert Denniston
Director
National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign
Office of National Drug Control Policy

With this chapter, the strategic marketing planning process begins, following the 10-step model presented in Chapter 2. Whether you are a student developing a plan for a course assignment or a practitioner working on a project for your organization, this practical approach is intended to guide you in creating a final product destined to “do good.” (In Appendix A, you will also find worksheets that follow this planning outline and a resource to receive an electronic copy.) For those among you who are reading this “just for fun,” the process is illustrated with a variety of examples to make it come to life for you too.

**Step 1, Describing the Plan Background, Purpose, and Focus** for your plan, and **Step 2, Conducting a Situation Analysis**, are both relatively brief and will be covered together in this chapter. As mentioned earlier, this model begins “with the end in mind,” inspiring your decision-making audiences with the problem your plan will address and the possibility it intends to realize. With this background, you then paint a vivid picture of the marketplace where you will be operating and are honest about the challenges you face and what you will need to address and prepare for in order to be successful.

In our opening case story, you will read how a vivid (though daunting) picture of the marketplace inspired and guided this program to “rise to the occasion.”
MARKETING HIGHLIGHT

Above the Influence


ROBERT W. DENNISTON, MA
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Background

In 1998, the U.S. Congress created the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign with the goal of preventing and reducing youth drug use. Unprecedented in size and scope, the campaign is the most visible symbol of the federal government’s commitment to youth drug prevention. A strategically integrated communications effort, the award-winning campaign combines advertising with public communications outreach to deliver clear, consistent, and credible anti-drug messages to America’s youth.

Since 2002 the campaign has focused predominantly on marijuana, a policy decision based on the fact that a key public health goal is to delay onset of use of the first drugs of abuse—marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol—which results in fewer drug problems of any kind both in the teen years and for a lifetime. In fact, marijuana constitutes 88% of all teen illegal drug use, and more teens are in drug treatment for marijuana dependence than for all other illegal drugs combined. Today’s marijuana is more potent and easily available, and teens are using it at a younger age than a generation ago, which makes them more vulnerable to addiction and related problems.

Situational Analysis

The campaign has spent much effort to assess both its micro-level and macro-level environments, especially factors that help understand the teen target audience.

At the micro-level, the campaign leverages several internal resources and partnerships:

- A solid scientific and behavioral research base to serve as the campaign’s foundation, including formative, process, and outcome evaluation
- Rigorous ongoing analysis of teen target beliefs, wants, and needs
- Pro bono advertising partners created in conjunction with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, involving some of America’s top advertising agencies
- Participation by leading media corporations as well as civic, volunteer, youth-serving, education, prevention, public health, and multicultural organizations

Macro-level influences are significant, involving culture, demography, and technology:

- Many teens perceive marijuana to be harmless, despite evidence that use impairs judgment, delays reaction time, and harms brain development and social skills. Some begin use of marijuana to “fit in” with their peers, on the mistaken belief that most are using. Others begin because they have a need for sensation or novelty—the “sensation-seeking” personality. Still others begin use to
self-medicate. In popular culture, teen drug use is often normalized and seen as a natural act of youthful rebellion. There is general convergence in drug use patterns among teens: girls have caught up with boys (in part due to the fact that at puberty their self-esteem tends to plummet and they look for more ways to fit in); urban, suburban, and rural rates are more similar than different; and ethnic group use varies more by drug type than across drugs generally.

- Today’s technology exposes them to pro-drug messages through the Internet, including pro-drug Web sites, spam, and social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook. Teens report high prevalence of pro-drug messages in popular media, including movies, video games, television, music, and the Internet, as well as on clothing and other items. When teens kept diaries on drug depiction in the media, they reported that slightly more than half (53%) of the messages they encountered were explicitly pro-drug, with only a little over one third (37%) judged as anti-drug. Moreover, a pulse-check of buzz on the Internet reveals that pro-marijuana messages outnumber anti-marijuana messages 2 to 1.

- While there has always been a generation gap, advances in technology make it even more challenging for parents. One third of 13- to 17-year-olds and half of 16- to 17-year-olds report that their parents know “very little or nothing” about what they do on the Internet, and 65% of parents believe they could do a better job supervising their teen’s media use.

- Teens are the most marketed-to segment of society, making it a challenge to break through heavy advertising and teens’ media sophistication—and often cynicism.

- Teens’ parents are more likely to want to be their teen’s friend, thus often giving mixed messages about drug use, in part because their generation was more likely to have used, so they may be uncomfortable asking their own kids not to do something they have done for fear of appearing hypocritical. Many parents believe they are virtually powerless to influence their teen due to the influence of popular culture and peer pressure, so avoid parental responsibilities. Too, they underestimate how easy it is to get alcohol and marijuana.

**Audience and Behavioral Objectives**

The campaign targets teens, specifically youth aged 12 to 18, their parents, and caregivers. The campaign has segmented its audience to the vast majority of teens who are as yet uncommitted to either use or nonuse, based on the understanding that, like teen sex, just because you did it once does not mean you have to do it again. Parents are considered a key audience because, despite popular belief, they remain the strongest influence on their teens. Goals for the campaign are focused on the overall drug strategy of reducing teen use by 25% within 5 years. To contribute to that bold goal, the campaign has set forth specific objectives to increase teen perception of risk and peer disapproval of drug use, as well as process goals such as advertising reach and frequency. For parents, objectives include increasing the proportion of parents who discuss drugs with their teens frequently and who monitor their teens.

**Campaign Strategy**

The campaign recognizes that much teen drug use is based on the belief that marijuana is relatively harmless, and that top-down, agenda-driven anti-drug messages have limited
credibility and relevance to today’s teens. As a result, the campaign has focused for nearly 2 years on the “Above the Influence” brand, which asks teens to remain above the influence of drugs and those who promote drug use as a means of fitting in, demonstrating independence, or just having a good time. A five-phase research process was conducted to explore this concept and develop and test messages before this brand was launched.

This strategy better fits today’s teens, who increasingly want to make decisions for themselves and who value relationships. Thus, the message strategy increasingly focuses on aspirational messages, with the key negative consequence being harm to relationships—letting down a friend due to being under the influence or disappointing parents due to drug use—and missing out on opportunities to have fun and enjoy life. Such social consequences tend to be more powerful drivers of behavior than negative consequences that focus on physical harm.

In addition, the campaign aims to reduce the belief that marijuana use is widespread among teens, thus reducing the intent to use the drug to fit in. While today’s teens are less likely to disapprove of a peer’s drug use—and are generally more accepting of differences in culture and lifestyle—drug use that results in problems for the user or friends is more likely to be actively disapproved of.

The campaign employs various media to deliver its messages to teens:

**Advertising:** Paid and donated campaign advertising on television, radio, print, and the Internet delivers anti-drug information to target audiences through more than 1,800 media outlets across the country. The ads go through qualitative and quantitative copy testing to ensure messages will be effective when they reach their audiences. About 75% of campaign funds are allocated to the purchase of advertising time and space, which enables high reach and frequency (see Box 5.1).

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### Box 5.1

**Radio Script for Above the Influence**

**Pete’s Couch/Paid Spot: 60 Seconds**

**VO:** I smoked weed and nobody died. I didn’t get into a car accident, I didn’t drown in some swimming pool, I didn’t OD on heroin the next day. Nothing happened. We just sat on Pete’s couch for 11 hours. Now you tell me, what’s going to happen on Pete’s couch? Might be the safest thing in the world, just sitting on Pete’s couch for 11 hours—no way you’re gonna die. Fact, you wanna keep yourself alive, go over to Pete’s and sit on his couch till you’re 86. Keep yourself protected from the truly scary things out in the real world—like playing hoops on a concrete court or asking a girl out to the movies. You wanna play it safe, sit on Pete’s couch all day every day. Just sit there. Nice and still. Yeah, so I smoked weed and I didn’t die. The problem is, I missed driving hard to the basket and I missed a good movie with a nice girl. So even though I didn’t die, it’s like a different kind of dying. I figure I’ll take my chances out there in the real world. I don’t know, call me reckless.

**ANNCR:** Check out abovetheinfluence.com.

Legal: Sponsored by Office of National Drug Control Policy and Partnership for a Drug-Free America.
News Media: Research shows that mass media are a primary source of information about drugs and related issues for both teens and those who influence them, especially parents. The media campaign reaches out to news sources by hosting local/regional media briefings with drug experts; conducting national news conferences with leaders in the areas of public health, education, and youth; and involving youth and parents themselves as authentic voices.

The Internet: The campaign has been a leader in social marketing on the Internet. The campaign’s family of Web sites for teens and parents receive approximately 5 million page views and almost 2 million visitors per month. Traffic is driven to the sites through online and traditional advertising and publicity, Web links through Internet sites that support the campaign messages (e.g., news, health, or target-age-related), Internet search engines, and direct access (see Figure 5.1).

Materials: With input from behavioral science experts, the campaign develops a wide range of materials for distribution to its audiences of youth and parents, including a general market booklet, *Navigating the Teen Years: A Parent’s Handbook for Raising Healthy Teens*, as well as an interactive CD-ROM for parents. The campaign also produced three parent guides for the general market, African American, and Hispanic (bilingual) parent, and teen postcards encouraging youth to live above the influence of drugs and other pressures.

Entertainment Industry Outreach: The campaign provides information and resources to entertainment industry writers and producers to increase accurate depictions of drug use in entertainment programming. The campaign holds regular media roundtable events for entertainment industry writers and reporters on hot topics such as methamphetamine, ecstasy, steroids, and early intervention, always involving youth as authentic sources.

Partnerships: Partners distribute anti-drug information, materials, and messages to their members and communities through a number of different channels, including localized Open Letter print ads and events and highly visible meetings attended by young people and their parents. Campaign partners include the National PTA, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Students Against Destructive Decisions, and many ethnic organizations, whose involvement adds credibility and reach to the campaign messages.

Results

In late 2006, the annual Monitoring the Future study, conducted by the University of Michigan, reported a 23% decline in current use of illicit drugs by youth over the past 5 years and a 25% drop in marijuana use (the
The survey measured past month use of illicit drugs, including marijuana, LSD, other hallucinogens, crack, other cocaine, or heroin, or any use of other drugs among a sample of approximately 50,000 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in public and private secondary schools. The only category of drugs that showed an increase was prescription and over-the-counter products, especially pain relievers such as Vicodin.

While it is difficult to attribute such good news to any particular influence, the campaign interprets these declines as solid signs of success, in part based on tracking data gathered monthly from more than 500 teen interviews to monitor campaign performance in real time. In addition, the campaign has documented a variety of process and output measures through ongoing reports on its results.

For further information about the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, visit

www.mediacampaign.org
www.abovetheinfluence.com (for youth)
www.freevibe.com (for youth)
www.theantidrug.com (for parents)

MAPPING THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS: STEP #1 AND STEP #2

To illustrate the first two steps in planning, we have chosen, for the most part, scenes and scenarios from China, ones representing social marketing opportunities to address a variety of social issues. Our intention is for you to capture the worldwide applicability for this very portable model.

Step #1: Describing the Plan
Background, Purpose, and Focus

Background

Begin the first section of your social marketing plan by briefly identifying the social issue your plan will be addressing—most likely a public health problem, safety concern, environmental threat, or community need. You then move on to present information and facts that led your organization to take on the development of this plan. What’s the problem? How bad is it? What happened? What is contributing to the problem? How do you know? It may include epidemiological, scientific, or other research data from credible sources—data that substantiates and quantifies the problem for the reader. The development of the plan might have been precipitated by an unusual event such as a school shooting or it might simply be fulfilling one of your organization’s mandates. In either case, this section should leave the reader understanding why you have developed the plan and wanting to read on to find out what you are proposing to do to address the social issue.
It wouldn’t be surprising, for example, to find the following paragraphs in the background information of a social marketing plan developed to reduce air pollution in Hong Kong.

In June 2006, a front page article in the *South China Morning Post* reported that according to a major study released the day before, air pollution was costing Hong Kong over 1,600 lives and at least $1.5 billion a year in direct health care costs and $504 million in lost productivity. The research had been conducted and analyzed by experts from three Hong Kong universities and a public policy think tank. The study also found that the city could each year save up to 64,000 bed days in hospitals and 6.8 million visits to family doctors if it improved its air quality from “average” to “good.” Hong Kong’s air-quality standards were further reported to be below those of Paris, New York, London, and Los Angeles, and the city’s concentration of air pollutants exceeded World Health Organization standards by 200%.

Some believe a decade of passive approaches to tackling air pollution is to blame. The good news is that other cities are “recovering,” and there are many options and solutions to consider that a social marketing effort could support, including increasing use of public transportation, providing incentives for energy-efficient appliances, fixtures and electric bikes, and replacing old vehicles more quickly.

**Purpose**

Given this background, you now craft a broad purpose statement for the campaign. It answers the questions, What is the potential impact of a successful campaign? and What difference will it make? This statement is sometimes confused with objective or goal statements. In this planning model, it is different from each of these. An *objective* in a social marketing campaign is what we want our target audience to do (behavior objective) and what they may need to know (knowledge objective) or believe (belief objective) in order to be persuaded. Our *goals* establish a desired level of behavior change as a result of program and campaign efforts. They are quantifiable and measurable. The campaign purpose, by contrast, is the ultimate impact (benefit) that will be realized if your target audience performs the desired behaviors at the intended levels. Typical purpose statements, like the background information, should inspire support for the plan. They don’t need to be long or elaborate at this point. The following are a few examples:

- Decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS among African Americans.
- Reduce the amount of time it takes to get through airport security.
- Improve water quality in Lake Sammamish.
- Increase the number of pets in the county that are spayed and neutered.
- Eliminate the stigma surrounding mental illness.

A plausible social marketing plan addressing pedestrian injuries in China illustrates this sequential thought process.
The background section of this plan would have likely included statistics describing pedestrian-related injury rates, locations where injuries occurred, and populations most affected—ones such as the estimate that traffic injuries claim the lives of more than 18,500 children aged 14 and under in China each year. And that further analysis of motor vehicle collisions typically show two main reasons for child traffic injuries: children (1) suddenly running into driveways and (2) crossing a street behind or just in front of a car. Surveys also indicate that 65% of children aged 8 to 10 walk to school, but only 15% are accompanied by adults. And among the 40% of children surveyed who had problems crossing roads, lack of traffic signs and crosswalks were the major problems.2

Several related purpose statements might then have been considered, including increasing proper use of crosswalks by students and decreasing accidents among children in driveways. As you can probably tell, each of these purpose statements will lead you in a different strategic direction, with the crosswalk problem more likely solved by products such as pedestrian flags and fluorescent vests, and the driveway problem addressed by adults walking with children to school and teaching them about navigating driveways. In the end, one would be chosen for the plan (as a start).

**Focus**

Now a focus is selected to narrow the scope of the plan, choosing from the vast number of potential options to contribute to the plan’s purpose (e.g., decrease accidents among children in driveways) one the plan will address (e.g., adults walking with children to school). This decision-making process can begin with brainstorming several major potential approaches (focuses) that might contribute to the plan’s purpose. These may be approaches that the agency has discussed or undertaken in the past; they may be new for the organization, recently identified as areas of greatest opportunity or emerging need; or they may be ones that other organizations have focused on and should be considered for your organization. Table 5.1 lists different social issues and possible focuses of each. The areas of potential focus may be behavior-related, population-based (though not yet a target market segment), or product-related strategies, but they are broad at this point. They will get narrowed further in the subsequent planning process.

Several criteria can be used for choosing the most appropriate focus from your initial list of options:

- **Behavior Change Potential:** Is there a clear behavior that can be promoted to address the issue?
- **Market Supply:** Is this issue already being addressed adequately in this way by other organizations and campaigns?
- **Organizational Match:** Is this a good match for the sponsoring organization? Is it consistent with its mission and culture? Can its infrastructure support promoting and accommodating the behavior change? Does it have staff expertise to develop and manage the effort?
- **Funding Sources and Appeal:** Which approach has the greatest funding potential?
- **Impact:** Which approach has the greatest potential to contribute to the social issue?
Chapter 5: Mapping the Internal and External Environments

Table 5.1 Identifying Potential Focuses for Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Issue (Hypothetical Sponsoring Organization)</th>
<th>Campaign Purpose</th>
<th>Options for Campaign Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Family Planning (Nonprofit Organization)          | Decrease teen pregnancies | • Birth control  
• Abstinence  
• Sexual assault prevention  
• Talking to your child about sex  
• Abortion counseling |
| Traffic Injuries (State Traffic Safety Commission) | Decrease drinking and driving | • Designated drivers  
• Underage drinking and driving  
• Promoting tougher new laws  
• Military personnel  
• Repeat offenders |
| Air Pollution (Regional Air Quality Council)       | Reduce fuel emissions | • Carpooling  
• Mass transit  
• Walking to work  
• Telecommuting  
• Not topping off gas tanks  
• Gas blowers |
| Senior Wellness (City Department of Neighborhoods) | Increase opportunities for community senior gatherings | • Tai chi classes in parks  
• Singing groups in pedestrian malls  
• Disco dancing under overpasses  
• Neighborhood watch programs |

The best focus for a social marketing campaign would then have a high potential for a behavior change strategy, fill a significant need and void in the marketplace, match the organization’s capabilities, and have a high funding potential (see Table 5.2).

Step #2: Conducting a Situation Analysis

Now that you have a purpose and focus for your plan, your next step is to conduct a quick audit of internal factors and external forces that are anticipated to have some impact on or relevance for subsequent planning decisions. As may be apparent, it was critical for you to have selected a purpose and focus for your plan first, as they provide the context for this exercise. Without it, you would be scanning all aspects of the environment versus just the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) relevant to your specific plan. It would be overwhelming indeed.
Figure 5.2 presents a graphic overview of these factors and forces anticipated to have some impact on your target market and therefore your efforts. As indicated, picture your target market at the center of your planning process. (A specific segment of the population you will be targeting will be selected in Step 3, in part based on this analysis.) In the first concentric circle are the 4Ps, the variables that you as a marketer have the most control over. Next, a little farther away from the target, are factors associated with the sponsoring organization for the campaign, ones thought of as the microenvironment. The outer concentric circle depicts the macroenvironment, forces the marketer has little or no control over but ones that have influence on your target market and therefore your effort.

**The Microenvironment: Internal Factors**

The microenvironment consists of factors related to the organization sponsoring or managing the social marketing effort—ones therefore considered internal:
Resources: How are your levels of funding for the project? Is there adequate staff time available? Do you have access to expertise related to the social issue or target populations that you can easily tap?

Service Delivery Capabilities: Does the organization have distribution channels available for current products and services or ones you might develop? Are there any concerns with the current or potential quality of this service delivery?
Management Support: Does management support this project? Have they been briefed on it?

Issue Priority: Within the organization, is the social issue your plan will be addressing a priority for the organization? Are there other issues you will be competing with for resources and support, or is this one high on the list?

Internal Publics: Within the organization, who is likely to support this effort? Who might not? Are there groups or individuals whose buy-in will be needed in order to be successful?

Current Alliances and Partners: What alliances and partners does the sponsoring organization have that could potentially provide additional resources such as funding, expertise, access to target populations, endorsements, message delivery, and/or material dissemination?

Past Performance: How is the organization’s reputation relative to projects such as this? What successes and failures are relevant?

Strengths

Make a (bulleted) list of major organizational strengths relative to this plan, based at least in part on an audit of these seven internal factors. These points will be ones your plan will want to maximize. You may not have something to note for each of the factors. What you should be aware of is that this list will guide you in many subsequent decisions such as which target markets you can best reach and serve, what products (programs and services) you have the resources and support to develop, prices you will (need to) charge, incentives you will be able to afford to offer, and existing alliances you might be able to tap for delivery of products, services, promotional materials, and messages.

For another brief illustration from China, consider a plan with a purpose to reduce energy consumption and a focus on reducing commercial electrical use, a plan spurred by recent statistics indicating that the energy-efficiency rate of China stood (in 2005) at 33%, 10 percentage points lower than the average advanced world level. One could imagine that a national group charged with responsibility for developing this plan would begin fully aware of one of their major strengths—that as a result of blackouts experienced in dozens of provincial-level power grids, energy saving had topped the government agenda. (In the end, this may have led to changes in infrastructure found today in China—ones such as self-activated escalators in hotel lobbies and hotel rooms that require room keys to be inserted in order for lights to go on. And of course lights then go off as guests leave the room with the key they will need when they return.)
Weaknesses

On the flip side, a similar list is made of factors that don’t look as positive for your effort, ones you may need a few action items, even strategies, to minimize. This bulleted list is also constructed by reviewing each of the same seven internal factors, noting ones that stand out as a potential concern for developing and implementing a successful plan. Most frequently for governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (the likely sponsors of a social marketing effort), concerns are in the area of resource availability and issue priority, as in the following example.

Consider internal factors challenging those charged with developing a plan to reduce teen smoking in China, where there are more than 100 million smokers under the age of 18.4 According to an article in the China Daily in May 2006, a nongovernmental organization, China Tobacco Control Association, wants to educate the public about the dangers of teen smoking, “but without money, what can we do?”5 The article cites a lack of government funds (resources) for antismoking education and a historical lack of priority for this issue. In Beijing, for example, a regulation was issued 10 years ago banning smoking in public areas, but enforcement is apparently weak (an issue priority for a key partner organization in this case) and “smoking is still rampant in these places.”6

The Macroenvironment: External Forces

The macroenvironment is the set of forces typically outside the influence of the social marketer but must be taken into account, as they may either currently have an impact on your target market or are likely to in the near future. In each of the following seven categories, you will be noting any major trends or events you may want to take advantage of (opportunities) or prepare for (threats). Remember, you are interested in those related to the purpose and focus for your plan:

Cultural Forces: Trends and happenings related to values, lifestyles, preferences, and behaviors often influenced by factors such as advertising, entertainment, media, consumer goods, corporate policies, fashion, religious movements, health concerns, environmental concerns, and racial issues

Technological Forces: Introduction or potential introduction of new technologies and products that may support or hinder your effort

Demographic Forces: Trends and changes in population characteristics, including age, ethnicity, household composition, employment status, occupation, income, and education
Natural Forces: Forces of “nature,” including ones such as famine, fires, drought, hurricanes, energy supply, water supply, endangered species, and floods

Economic Forces: Trends affecting buying power, spending, and perceptions of economic well-being

Political/Legal Forces: Potential laws and actions of governmental agencies that could affect campaign efforts or your target audience

External Publics: Groups outside the organization other than current partners and alliances that could have some impact on your efforts (good or bad) and/or your target audience, including new potential partners

It is important to note, as was discussed in Chapter 1, that social marketing experts are now recommending that you also consider the role you can play to influence decision makers who can impact these upstream forces (e.g., focusing on school district administrators to increase formal physical activity programs in elementary schools).

Opportunities

A major purpose for scanning the external environment is to discover opportunities that you can take advantage of and build into your plan. Your activities can be leveraged by benefiting from the visibility and resources that other groups may be bringing to your issue or the increased awareness and concern that you find is already out there in the general public, as it was in the following example.

According to another article in the China Daily in May 2006, the number of pet owners in China has been soaring, as are the associated social problems—ones related to owners not cleaning up pet waste on sidewalks, increases in rabies, and abandonment of pets when an owner turned out to be ill prepared for the responsibility. Several organizations were picking up the challenge, including the country’s Ministry of Health and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. An environmental scan on their part would likely identify several macroenvironmental factors impacting their target populations, ones they would consider as they prepare their approach to influencing public behaviors. Most cities in China had removed the ban on dog-rearing in the urban area in the 1980s after food rationing was scrapped (political/legal); 2006 was the Year of the Dog on the Chinese calendar (cultural); having a pet was now a symbol of prosperity, where in the past it was once looked upon as a bourgeois way of life (economic); and some attributed the popularity of pets to a growing sense of loneliness common among city dwellers, particularly the elderly living alone and single white-collar workers (demographics).
**Chapter 5: Mapping the Internal and External Environments**

**Threats**

On the other hand, some of these forces will represent potential threats to your project and will be something your plan will want to address or prepare for in the event it happens. Understanding the influences on your target population can provide insight, as shown in the following example.

Referring again to the problem with tobacco use in China and the interest in reducing teen smoking, numerous external factors threaten success as well as the internal weaknesses noted earlier. Imagine the following powerful and entrenched cultural, economic, and legal forces operating in the marketplace for those tackling this social issue—ones also mentioned in the May 2006 *China Daily* article:

- People begin smoking at an early age, especially in tobacco-planting areas.
- Parents and teachers smoke in front of children.
- China is the world’s largest tobacco producer and consumer, so smoking is accepted, even supported, given the close relationship between the production and consumption of tobacco and the national economy.
- Cigarette companies are still allowed to advertise their brands.
- There are no national laws or regulations in China to forbid selling cigarettes to youngsters.

**Review of Past or Similar Efforts**

One of the principles for success mentioned in Chapter 3 is to begin your social marketing planning with a search and review of prior efforts undertaken by your agency and similar campaigns planned and launched by others. When reviewing past efforts, you are looking for lessons learned. What worked well? What didn’t? What did evaluators think should have been done differently? What was missing? One of the benefits of working in the public and nonprofit sectors is that your peers and colleagues around the world often can and will help you. They can share research, plans, campaign materials, outcomes, and war stories. Finding these resources (and people) can be as simple as joining social marketing Listservs, ones mentioned in Appendix B of this book, that have thousands of members around the world. It can also be as simple as watching what others have done, as illustrated in this next example from China.

Nations and communities around the world interested in increasing bicycling (especially as a commute mode) could benefit from observing what China has done over the decades to make bicycling a social norm. They provide bike lanes, not just paths, ones protected from cars that might be opening a door (see Figure 5.3). At many intersections, there’s a traffic signal—just for bikers—one that gives them their own time and space (see Figure 5.4). In Beijing, there are sports coliseums, adding to the excitement
For those concerned about “overexertion,” electric bicycles costing about the same as a cell phone and getting the equivalent of 1,362 miles per gallon of gas are common and certainly not a “sign of weakness.” For those concerned about costs, the government makes the competition (cars) very unattractive through escalating gas prices and high fees for vehicle licensing, such as the $5,000 licensing fee in Shanghai that doubles the cost of the cheapest cars. And to those concerned about rain, they’ve thought of everything, including form-fitted heavy-duty ponchos that protect legs, heads, packages—even two riders (see Figure 5.5).

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A FOCUS FOR YOUR PLAN**

Conscientious social marketers will no doubt face ethical dilemmas and challenges throughout the planning and implementation process. Though ethical considerations are varied, several themes are common: social equity, unintended consequences, competing priorities, full disclosure, responsible stewardship, conflicts of interest, and whether the end justifies (any) means.

For each of the planning steps covered in this text, major potential ethical questions and concerns will be highlighted at the completion of most chapters, beginning with this one. We present more questions than answers, with an intention to increase awareness of “ethical moments” and the chances that your decisions will be based on a social conscience that leads all of us to “higher ground.”

When you brainstormed potential focuses and then picked one for your current plan, your first ethical question and challenge probably popped up. “What will happen to the ones that you didn’t pick?” For decreasing drunk driving, potential focuses mentioned included choosing designated drivers; promoting a new tougher law; and focusing on specific populations, including military personnel or repeat offenders. Since each of these choices would lead to a different marketing strategy, you can only (effectively) deal with one at a time. One potential way to address this challenge is to present a comprehensive organizational plan for the social issue, indicating when important areas of focus will be handled and why they have been prioritized as such.
An additional common question and challenge regarding your focus may also come up, often from a colleague or peer. “If you push your desired behavior, won’t you make it tougher for me to accomplish mine?” Some have and will argue, for example, that if you focus on a campaign to increase the number of teens who choose a designated driver, won’t you increase the number of teens who drink? Won’t it look like “the government” approves of teens drinking? Good questions. And to answer, you will want to be prepared with your background and SWOT data as well as outcomes from prior similar efforts conducted by other agencies in other markets.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the first 2 of the 10 steps in the social marketing planning model.

**Step #1** is intended to help you (and others) be clear why you are embarking on this project and, in broad and brief terms, what you want to accomplish and where you will focus your efforts. This will include:

- Gathering and presenting background information relative to the social issue your plan will address
- Choosing a campaign purpose
- Brainstorming and then selecting a focus for this plan

**Step #2** provides rich descriptions of the marketplace where you will be vying for your customers and creates a common understanding of the internal and external challenges you will face by conducting an analysis of:

- **Internal factors** that impact your readiness for the task, identifying strengths to maximize and weaknesses to minimize related to organizational resources, service delivery, management support, issue priority, internal publics, current alliances and partners, and past performance
- **External forces** that will impact your success, identifying external opportunities to take advantage of and threats to prepare for related to cultural, technological, demographic, natural, economic, and political/legal forces, as well as external publics other than current partners and alliances
- **Prior similar campaigns**, with an interest in lessons learned as well as opportunities for using existing research, plans, and materials developed by others